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ABSTRACT

The Homework Helper Program with 100 centers in New York City, serving 1500 tutors and 4500 tutees, helps both tutors and tutees. Tutors (disadvantaged secondary school students) are paid $1.50-$2.00 an hour which helps them stay in school and gives them experiences of "success." Tutees (fourth, fifth, and sixth grade pupils performing below grade level) benefit by receiving individual help in basic skills and study habits, and by the opportunity to identify with a positive role model offered by the tutor. Tutorial sessions are held under the direction of a master teacher who trains and guides the tutors and acts as a liaison between tutors and classroom teachers. Morning summer programs were held from 1964 through 1969. (KG)

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Center for Urban Education

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Program Conspectus

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Program: Homework Helper Program

Location: New York City

Date Started: The program began in February 1963 with 110 tutors and 330 tutees in 9 Homework Helper centers. Approximately 100 centers, serving 1,500 tutors and 4,500 tutees, annually had been established by spring 1969. (R2)

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Scope: Tutors: 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade students from local high schools, and some students from nearby colleges. Tutees: 4th, 5th, and 6th-grade pupils functioning below grade level; a few centers serve failing junior high school students; there are currently 10 centers with programs for senior high school students.

Staff: Each center is administered by 1 regularly licensed master teacher and 1 to 3 school aides. The center staff is responsible to an area coordinator (1 for each participating school district) who is responsible in turn to the district superintendent.

Special Materials, Equipment, & Facilities: Each center is located in an elementary school and uses 2 or more of its regular classrooms and in some cases, its library and laboratory facilities. A wide range of reading and mathematics materials is available to the tutors.

Description of Activities:

The Homework Helper Program (HHP) features "the training and employment of indigenous high school and college youngsters to serve as tutors for younger children in the disadvantaged areas of New York City." (R1,p.1) HHP serves both tutors and tutees in several ways. Payment to the tutors of $1.50-$2.00 an hour may enable them to remain in school. The tutorial experience may motivate them toward improved academic achievement and the choice of a career in teaching. Another concomitant is the opportunity for the tutor to experience "success." Tutees benefit by receiving individual help in basic skill improvement and study habits, and by the opportunity to identify with a positive role model offered by the tutor.

Tutors are recommended by their guidance counselors and selected by such criteria as attendance records, parental permission, report card marks, and geographic proximity to the tutoring center. Applicants may also be screened and referred by the local Community Action Agency. Tutees are chosen by their teachers on the basis of reading retardation and evidence of need to develop independent work habits and study skills.

Under the direction of a master teacher, tutorial classes are held in the participating schools Monday through Thursday from 3 to 5 P.M. The master teacher trains and guides the tutors and acts as liaison between tutors and classroom teachers. Tutors receive 2 weeks of orientation and continuation training twice a month. A specially prepared manual provides guidelines for tutoring techniques and development of rapport with tutees. (R2) Pupils work on a one-to-one basis with their tutors for 2-hour sessions twice a week. Typically, the sessions begin with a snack and brief chat. Then comes a 40-minute period of help in understanding homework assignments and improving study skills. The next 30 or 40 minutes are devoted to reading or other academic subjects, using specially purchased materials. Creative and recreational activities of various kinds complete the sessions.

Originally developed by Mobilization for Youth and the Board of Education, the HHP was decentralized in 1967 with support from ESEA Title I funds. The program now operates in 10 New York City school districts under the jurisdiction of the local district superintendents. A Board of Education HHP Tutorial Assistance Center was established to aid in planning the decentralized programs, and to help in the training of professional and paraprofessional staffs and in the preparation of materials. This Center also disseminates information about successful tutorial techniques.

From 1964 through 1969 morning summer programs were in operation.

Evaluation:

An evaluation of HHP in its first year of operation measured the effect of tutorial services on both pupils and tutors. (R3) The experimental design was based on assessing the effects of the 2-hour and 4-hour tutoring sessions per week. An experimental group of 365 4th and 5th grade pupils and a control group of 157 were pre-and-posttested with the New York Tests of Growth in Reading, Level C, Form 1. During the 5 month period between testings only the 4-hour tutees showed significant gains of 6 months in reading scores. The control group gained $3\frac{1}{2}$ months. Covariance analysis showed that "tutorial assistance results in significant reading improvement providing that the assistance is given as often as 4 hours a week for a period of 26 weeks." (R3,p.17)

A similar design was used to measure effects on reading scores of tutors, as measured by the Advanced Level of the Iowa Silent Reading Tests (Revised New Edition). An experimental group of 97 was compared with a control group of 57. The experimental group showed a reading gain of 1.7 years.

Pupil attendance has been over 80% and tutor attendance, 90%.

In 1969, Evaluations of HHP in 2 school districts were prepared under the auspices of Fordham University's School of Education. (R4,R5) Both studies are based on interviews, observations, and questionnaire surveys. Both note numerous positive features of the program. Each study recommended the continuation, further improvement, and expansion of HHP which, it is felt, is meeting its objectives. One evaluation points out that the "greatest weakness" in the District 14 program was a failure of communication between HHP and the payroll division of the Board of Education. Payroll checks for the high school tutors were constantly missing, made out incorrectly, or delayed as much as 5 months. This situation was given as the reason for leaving by 24% of the tutors who did so. (R5,p.7)

The city-wide coordinator indicated that there will be regular annual evaluations of HHP by the local districts, as required by Title I.

Budget:

The program, funded under ESEA Title I was decentralized in 1967 and is now under the jurisdiction of the local school superintendents who have their own local budgets. The total expenditure for 1968/69 was approximately $1,200,000. According to the citywide coordinator, the following costs were covered by this amount: payment of $1.50 to $2.00 per hour to 1,500 tutors; salaries for 100 master teachers and 100 center attendants (grade school graduates); and supplies. The average expenditure per pupil (including tutors) was $200.

References:

1. New York City Board of Education. Fact sheet -- Homework Helper Program. New York, The Board, February 1969. (The Spring, 1968 fact sheet is available as ERIC document no. ED 020 279, mf $0.25, hc $0.24.)

2. New York City Board of Education, Homework Helper Program Tutorial Assistance Center. Welcome to Tutoring. New York, The Board, 1969. (Available from citywide coordinator's office.)

3. Cloward, Robert D. "Studies in tutoring." The Journal of Experimental Education, v 36, Fall 1967. p.14-25.

4. Baratta, Anthony N. An Evaluation of the District Nine Homework Helper Program. Title I Project. New York, Fordham University, 1969. (Available from citywide coordinator's office.)

5. Ashby, Claire; and Donald Lynch. An Evaluation of ESEA Title I Program "Homework Helpers." District 14. New York, Fordham University, 1969. (Available from citywide coordinator's office.)

6. U.S. Office of Education, Division of Compensatory Education. Homework Helper Program, New York City. Washington D.C. U.S. Office of Education, 1969. (A larger study of "exemplary programs," of which this is a part, is available as ERIC document no. ED 023 777, mf $1.50, hc $17.15.)

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) documents on microfiche or in hard copy may be ordered from EDPS, The National Cash Register Company, 4936 Fairmont Ave., Bethesda, Maryland 20014, using the ERIC accession number.

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Descriptors:

TUTORIAL PROGRAMS
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